JANUARY 174⅗.

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MEMORIAL

FOR THE

LINEN-MANUFACTURERS of SCOTLAND.

AS it is apprehended, that a new Tax will be wanted for carrying on the preſent War, it is hoped that the Propoſal made laſt Year, of laying on an additional Duty on foreign Linen, will be revived and ſupported not only by the honourable Gentlemen who diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their approbation of that meaſure but by all who are true Lovers of their Country; and as this Duty would be highly conducive to the promoting our own Manufactures, eſpecially if it be not drawn back at exportation, it is earneſtly begg'd that all perſons, who have a regard to the true intereſt of their Country, would lay aſide all private and perſonal views, and concur in promoting a Scheme, one of the moſt important to theſe Kingdoms, which ever came before a Britiſh Houſe of Commons.

BOTH in Britain and Ireland, the Manufacturers of fine and coarſe Linens have made a conſiderable progreſs, and as they are a mutual aid and aſſiſtance to each other, when under right regulations, and as ſome Countrys are more proper for the fine branch, while others are better calculated for the coarſe, they ſeem to deſerve equally the care and encouragement of the Public.

THE Manufacture of coarſe Linen is of great advantage to a Country, as it employs numbers of people, who without any tedious education, are ſoon able to carry it to perfection, many of whom poſſibly could never, at leaſt for a long time, be made fit to work in the finer kinds.

THE fine Manufacture again, is conſiderable for the high value of the goods it produces: Both of them have great claims to our attention, and in giving them an equal encouragement, the good of the whole Manufacture would be advanced, by every labourer's being employed according to the extent of his capacity and ſkill; and by a proper uſe being thereby made of Flax of all degrees of fineneſs, ſpun into yarn, and wrought up into cloth juſtly proportioned to the materials of which it is compoſed.

BUT then it will at firſt view appear that the ſame Duty on all foreign Linens, is very far from being an equal encouragement to our own Manufactures.—It were to be wiſhed that the Duty were to be laid on in an exact proportion to the value of the different kinds of Linens imported; but as that may meet with difficultys in ſome ſorts, it is at leaſt hop'd that there may be ſuch a difference in the Dutys of fine and coarſe Linens, as we ſhall take the liberty to point out in the following hints.

IF the Manufacture was quite in its infancy, and a ſcheme was to be form'd how to introduce it; in that caſe, it might be ſufficient at firſt to lay on a Duty of one penny *per* ell not to be again drawn back at exportation; or a Duty ſo high as might enable the Undertaker to underſell every Foreigner in ſome one branch or other, which would naturally fall to be of the coarſer kinds as they would be moſt affected by this new duty; and indeed ſuch kinds would beſt ſuit new beginners.

LET it be ſuppoſed, that this Duty of one penny *per* ell would enable us, in the courſe of a few years, to underſell the Foreigners in all ſuch kinds as did not exceed 10 pence *per* ell; when this was done, no farther length could be gone; the Foreigners would ſtill ſell their finer Linens at a rate cheaper than we could afford them, until a ſecond aid was obtained from the Legiſlature.—If then, another Duty of a penny was laid on foreign Linens, even that would do no more than enable us to underſell the Foreigners in Linen of 20 pence *per* ell value, while in the higher kinds they would ſtill rival us, for which the only remedy would be to lay on a third Duty of one penny *per* ell.

IF

If ſtill they continued to cut us out in the finer goods, and ſuch as were above 30 pence *per* ell, then doubtleſs a Government that had the intereſt of its Manufactures at heart, would lay on a fourth Duty not to be drawn back; and thus ſtep by ſtep lead their Subjects from the firſt rudiments as it were of the buſineſs, to excel by degrees in the higher branches.

Had meaſures of this kind been begun in due time and followed out as the circumſtances of the Manufacture required, the Nation by this time would have ſenſibly felt the good effects of them.

But as any accidental encouragement, the Manufacture met with, was on occaſion of taxes laid on foreign Linens purely to ſupply the exigencys of the Government, and not with any view to promote our home Linens, no ſuch method was obſerved, and every one by that means was left to follow that branch, which his genius, ſituation, the example of others, or perhaps chance pointed out to him.

Since then, the Manufacture has already made ſome advances in all its branches, it cannot now be treated in the above way, which would have very well ſuited its infant-ſtate: it now demands an equal ſupport in all its kinds by a Duty on every ſpecies of foreign Linen in ſome degree proportionable to the intrinſic value.

Any leſs Duty, than a penny *per* ell, laid on foreign Linen, would not be a ſuitable encouragement to the undertaking even the coarſer kinds, whoſe value lies chiefly in the great quantitys of coarſe flax they require, in which foreigners have the advantage of us.

We would humbly propoſe then, that an additional Duty of one penny *per* ell on all foreign Linens under 10 pence value were impoſed; and on Linens above that value, that ten *per cent.* were laid on, *ad valorem*, at leaſt on all Linens from 10 pence to 40 pence *per* ell value; and this would in effect be a Duty of two pence on Linen of 20 pence value, three pence on 30 pence and four pence on 40 pence cloth, and ſo proportionably on the intermediate ſorts: as for Linens above the value of 40 pence, we apprehend a Duty of four pence *per* ell is but a very moderate encouragement; ſome fine Linens, particularly from Holland, being of 10 ſhillings *per* ell value,

value, on which this Duty of four pence would ſcarce be felt.

Nor do we now think, the method of levying Dutys *ad valorem*, ſubject to any difficulty ſince the check that has been provided by an Act of Parliament paſt in the eleventh year of the late King, by which it is enacted that any Cuſtom-houſe Officer may oblige the Importer to ſell him the goods at the ſworn value put upon them at entry.

That this Duty would raiſe a large ſum, we are of opinion, can be no objection, conſidering the preſent public exigencys. If it ſhould have no effect as to encouraging our own Linens, there would at leaſt be a laſting fund created for raiſing money, at which even Foreigners could have no reaſon to murmur.

But ſuppoſing that the importation of foreign Linens ſhould, after ſuch a Duty, decreaſe, and his Majeſty's Subjects be ſupplied with their own Country Linen: This, by giving comfortable ſubſiſtance to many Thouſands now either a burden, or hurtful to Society, would occaſion a great increaſe in the taxes, which would do more than compenſate any deficiency that could happen on the new fund; and the Creditors may be ſecured on the aggregate Dutys, as was lately done in the caſe of the Gin-act.

Nor do we think ſuch an additional Duty would at all encourage ſmuggling, conſidering the bulk of the coarſer goods, in which the Duty would be moſt felt; and as for the very fine kinds, which are of leſs ſize, and ſo more liable to be run, the conſumpt thereof is moſtly in great and populous Towns, and the dealers therein men of ſubſtance and reputation, who purchaſe the goods from abroad in large quantitys and on eaſier terms than ſmugglers, always people of ruin'd and deſperate fortunes; and ſo the fair trader muſt be in a capacity to underſell them, eſpecially conſidering the unavoidable great expence attending this unlawful traffick, and that the Linen-manufacturers now diffuſed over the whole Iſland would be ſpys and checks on ſuch pernicious practices.

It is propoſed that no part of this Duty ſhould be drawn back: for if the Dutys were never ſo high, if they be not ſunk at exportation, we can reap no new benefit by the Plantations which are the natural

natural market for our coarſe goods, and that this will be no great load on them, we hope will evidently appear by calculations made on that head in a Pamphlet publiſhed in 1738, intitled, *A Letter from a Merchant to a Member of Parliament*, which was wrote to recommend the taking off the draw-back of foreign Linens: we heartily wiſh every friend to the Linen-buſineſs would take the trouble to peruſe it. In this Pamphlet it is calculated, with the greateſt appearance of evidence, that in the caſe of drawing back the whole Dutys on foreign Linen at exportation, which we reckon would be a greater burden on theſe goods than the additional Duty we propoſe, the increaſe of the expence thereby of cloathing a Negroe, would not exceed three pence yearly, which is ſuch a trifle, that ſurely it would be doing no juſtice to the Planters, to ſuppoſe they would in the leaſt repine at; the whole of the preſent draw-backs on foreign Linens exported to the Plantations or any foreign Country whatſoever, being only twenty eight thouſand pound *per annum*.

But ſuppoſing that our Colonys ſhould be put to this trifling charge, till they could be totally ſupplied from our own Manufactures, we think they ought to bear it for the good of their Mother-country, both on account of the protection given them by her, as well as in gratitude to the Manufacturers of theſe Kingdoms, by whoſe means all ſorts of foreign Linens are now afforded them ten *per cent* cheaper than they were twenty years ago. So that this preſent Duty, even at the utmoſt, puts them on no worſe footing than they were within that period of time.

If the Dutys are not ſunk at exportation, as the drawing back any Duty, eſpecially in goods variouſly rated, gives opportunity for frauds, the importer may thereby be enabled to ſell his goods at home, at bare firſt coſt and duty, making his profit by the fraud of exporting under wrong denominations.

It is objected by ſome people, that this new Duty may occaſion Linen to be ſmuggled into our Plantations from the French and Dutch Settlements; But that this is, in fact, impoſſible will eaſily appear from the reaſons given in the before-mentioned Pamphlet,

wherein the Author clearly proves that the hazard of ſuch a trade would be very great, and the profits ariſing from it very ſmall, even if there was no extraordinary danger attending it.

THE only argument as to the Plantations, that ſeems to have the leaſt weight, is, that an additional Duty may in ſome meaſure diſcourage the Trade betwixt Jamaica and New Spain, by encreaſing the price of foreign coarſe Linens, which are, it ſeems, a branch of this Traffick.

IN the firſt place, ſuppoſing the fact, is it reaſonable that the whole Linen-manufactures of Britain ſhould not be encouraged, becauſe ſuch encouragement hurts one branch of a particular Commerce? Next, let it be conſidered that this Trade, being intirely contraband, is extremely precarious, the continuance thereof depending abſolutely on the remiſſneſs of the Spainiards; it does not ſeem to deſerve ſo much attention as a permanent lawful Trade. It may alſo be noticed that the profits on that buſineſs, being neceſſarily very great, to make amends for the vaſt expence, riſques and diſappointments it is ſubject to, a ſmall increaſe of the firſt coſt of goods employed in that way, cannot be ſo ſoon, if it is at all felt, as if the Trade were regular and ſteddy, and reducible to calculations: This likeways may be a reaſon for introducing our own coarſe Linens into theſe parts, tho' not quite ſo cheap as the foreign ones.

BUT the grand objection, which, we hope to ſhow, has no ſolidity, is, that we cannot nor ever will be able to ſupply the demands of our Plantations; yet we think it no difficult matter to prove, that it is eaſily in our power, if properly encouraged, not only to ſupply the total conſumpt of Britain and Ireland in all kinds of Linen, but alſo to anſwer the whole demands of our Colonies, nay more, in time to export to other Nations, great quantitys of ſome branches of our own Linens.

IN the Pamphlet formerly referred to, it is computed that the yearly conſumpt of Linen, in the whole Britiſh dominions, is near Eighty-eight millions of yards, being at a medium ſix yards and a quarter

a quarter yearly to each Perſon of fourteen millions ſuppoſed to be the number of Inhabitants in Britain, Ireland, and the Plantations. Of theſe Eighty-eight millions of yards, by the Cuſtom-houſe books, there are imported thirty-two millions, and conſequently fifty-ſix millions muſt be manufactur'd in Britain and Ireland. Now whoever conſiders the great number of Poor in England, which appears by their high Poor's rates, and how many idle ſtarving inhabitants there are in Scotland and Ireland, frequently from want of employment at home, obliged to ſeek it abroad, will have no great difficulty to conceive that the Linen-manufacturers may be augmented very conſiderably, at leaſt one half of the preſent number, which augmentation would inſtantly furniſh to a trifle all the quantity of thirty-two millions now imported.

But as a Country's being fully employed in profitable Manufactures, and enjoying its full Rights and Libertys, not only prevents the Subjects from leaving it, but likewiſe occaſions a ſpeedy increaſe of people, by the encouragement they have to marry early, as alſo by the concourſe of induſtrious Foreigners to places where they are ſure of finding buſineſs and protection, there is ground to hope that in a few years we may be able not only to ſupply our own Dominions, but likewiſe to export conſiderable quantitys of certain kinds of our Linens to other Countrys.

It is ſome comfort to us to find that many of the Gentlemen of the moſt conſiderable Eſtates in the Plantations have ſhow'n a ſtrong deſire to encourage our Linen-manufactures, and have recommended the uſe of them warmly to their friends in a printed Letter ſign'd by great numbers of them, ſo that no oppoſition to this Duty can be ſuppoſed to ariſe from our Plantations.

It would be extremely dangerous to make any exceptions of any particular ſpecies of Linen, even tho' reſtricted to the ſmalleſt breadths: for the excepting Linen of any particular Country, from a Duty laid on all the other foreign cloths of the ſame fineneſs, would doubtleſs greatly increaſe the importation from that Country

Country and tend conſiderably to leſſen the Tax, beſides giving a handle for Frauds, already too much practiſed, by entering Linens under wrong denominations, whereby the Home-manufactures have been greatly affected.

AGAIN, if there was an exemption of a certain breadth, this might induce Foreigners to make their Linens narrower than formerly, and by increaſing the importation of goods of that kind in ſome meaſure defeat the fund, and the deſign of laying it on; and as this is a matter of the utmoſt conſequence, we humbly hope it will be attended to: For it muſt be remembered that cloth, even of half-yard breadth, is fit for a vaſt variety of things, particularly clothing Negroes in our Plantations, and all ſorts of cloaths for Children, for toweling and many other uſes. The importation of this narrow cloth, eſpecially from Ruſſia, has much increaſed on us, and the great cheapneſs of it has occaſioned it to be made uſe of in many ways, that it does not at firſt view ſeem to be proper for, ſuch as table and bed linen, and even ſhirting for the lower ſort of People in England; if this ſpecies be exeem'd from the Duty, a great deal more will be uſed in theſe and perhaps other ways, than has been yet thought of.

IF an exemption, of neceſſity, muſt be, we earneſtly beg it may be on cloth at the utmoſt of half-yard breadth, and, as it is already ſaid, even in that caſe it will be extremely prejudicial to our own Linens.

WE muſt again repeat, that as there is abundance of room for carrying on both the Manufactures of fine and coarſe Linens, they ought to be equally encouraged; and we beg leave to repreſent further, that if the fine Linens of our own make were more encouraged than the coarſe, and the latter by that means fell into ſome decay, the danger would not be great, as a very little alteration of our conduct would ſoon reſtore that Manufacture to its vigour; and as it would require no great effort of a Government, to ſet up the coarſe Linens in a Country where they had not been at all known, ſo it would be mighty eaſy to recover that branch in places where it once had had a footing, if by any inadvertency

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it had ſuffered: But this is far from being the caſe of the fine kinds, for as the advances in them are ſlow and attended with great expence, the inſtruction of the Workmen tedious, and the houſes and utenſils more coſtly, any wound this branch might receive, by a diſproportion'd encouragement of coarſe Linens, would be difficultly healed, and might have very pernicious conſequences.

THE Manufacture of fine Linen is the Staple of ſeveral parts of Scotland, and has as yet received little or no Publick encouragement, even the preſent one propoſed for it is extremely moderate, conſidering its value.

GREAT preparations have been made in Scotland for the fine Linen at a prodigious expence, which would in a great meaſure be loſt, if that branch of Manufacture ſhould fall into decay; many Fine-cloth-weavers have been trained up, and whole Countys of Fine-ſpinners brought to that pitch of perfection, as perhaps no other part of EUROPE can pretend to, which is in ſome meaſure owing to our Flax, the fineneſs and ſtrength of which is not to be exceeded in any Country; as a proof of this, our thread bears a character of ſtrength ſuperior to the Dutch or any other; it would be extreme bad management then, to allow the ſpinning of theſe fine yarns to be altogether loſt to the Country, or if continued, to let them be exported, or ſmuggled to our Rivals in the fine Manufacture: But one of theſe caſes muſt happen, if our fine cloth is allow'd to go to decay.

THE Undertakers of the fine Linen Manufacture in Scotland, after an obſtinate ſtruggle of twenty years have brought all the parts of it, to equal the Foreign in beauty and durableneſs; but yet from the cheapneſs of the materials and bleaching in foreign parts, the Linen of our Rivals is ſold in large parcels to the London Importers, cheaper than it can yet be afforded by us: ſo that our fine Linen-manufacture is greatly declining, and may in time come to be laid aſide intirely.

THE difficultys of it were, ſeveral years ago, thought to be in a great meaſure ſurmounted, as the whole that was then made, was readily ſold off, in a few months, after it had come from the whiten-

ing. This continued to be the ſentiments of moſt people, while the quantity made was no greater than the conſumption of Scotland, where it was eaſy for the Wearer to apply to the Firſt-hand, *viz*, the Manufacturer.——When from this opinion numbers of new Adventurers undertook the buſineſs, and a much greater quantity was made than either the conſumpt of Scotland requir'd, or of ſuch of the Engliſh as had opportunity of applying to the Manufacturer; a ſet of intermediate perſons, ſuch as might convey the Linen from them to the wearers, and who behoved themſelves to have a profit, became neceſſary.——Then it appear'd that the ſurplus of the home-conſumpt could not be convey'd to the wearer on ſo much better terms than the foreign Linen, as to engage the Engliſh whole-ſale Drapers to deal with the People of Scotland: The truth of this is evident by numbers of the fine Linen Manufacturers having of late given up their buſineſs; ſo that if no farther encouragement is given to it, by a proper Duty on foreign Linens of the ſame fineneſs, it can never be extended farther than the conſumpt of Scotland alone.

As we have mentioned the whole-ſale Linen-Drapers, it may be proper to notice that they will never be friends to the Manufacture of home-made Linens even tho' afforded as cheap, as they could import the like goods, in the largeſt quantitys, from abroad: for as they have the importation of foreign Linens intirely in their own hands, excluſive of the Retail-drapers, whom it is their buſineſs to furniſh, they can never in the ſame manner ingroſs the ſale of the home-made Linens, where every, the ſmalleſt, Dealer has the ſame advantages with them. This neceſſarily muſt deſtroy their whole-ſale trade, at the beſt of no uſe, if not hurtful to the Publick, whoſe intereſt it is always to be ſerved, as near as poſſible, from the firſt hand: for every intermediate dealer betwixt the Conſumer and Manufacturer, ſuperadds a new, and needleſs charge to the firſt coſt.

Again, as to the inferior Drapers imploy'd in retailing, even tho' we could ſerve them on the ſame terms as they deal with the whole-ſale Drapers, which, we are of opinion, we might do, if proper

proper allowances were made for the ſtrength and fabrick of our Cloth, yet moſt of theſe Gentlemen are under ſuch engagements with their old friends, the whole-ſale Drapers, that it is not to be expected they will alter the channel of their trade, without a very viſible advantage.

But as the Pamphlet, we have ſo often mention'd, puts the caſe of the whole-ſale Dealer in the ſtrongeſt light, we beg leave once more to refer to it.

If no farther Tax than a penny *per* ell was laid on all foreign Linens, the effect of ſuch a Duty, as has been obſerv'd, could not extend farther than to what is of 10 pence value, it could ſcarcely be felt in a Linen of 20 pence value, and in what is ſtill of a higher value, as its benefit could not at all be felt, it would neceſſarily have a bad effect: for if only ſuch encouragement is given as will promote the ſales of home-made coarſe cloth, there muſt preſently enſue a decay of the fine Linen-manufacture, the Spinners and Weavers occupied therein will naturally fall off into that branch where the greateſt encouragement is given, and the young people will be bred to no other, which muſt neceſſarily increaſe the price of fine ſpinning and weaving; our Bleach-yards, erected at a great charge, muſt want their accuſtomed ſupply of cloth, and our Bleachers, bred in the Harlem manner, muſt be forced to ſeek bread elſewhere, and the Art itſelf become in danger of being loſt to the Country.

If the fine Manufacture ſhould be once ſunk, it would almoſt be impoſſible again to recover it. The preſent Undertakers are ſenſible that they have uſed their utmoſt efforts, and after an immenſe expence and labour, flattered themſelves with the hopes of ſeeing it eſtabliſhed. If theſe hopes are baffled, it will be impoſſible for a diſpirited ſet of men to renew the attempt, nor will others be ſoon induced to ſet it on foot a-new, from a proſpect of any future encouragement that may be given them. Men in this way of life judge moſtly from the experience of their neighbours, and will hardly be brought to think, that what has been carried on by many of their acquaintance in the moſt anxious manner

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for many years together, and after all fail'd in their hands, can again be ſucceſsfully attempted by any. There is a ſpirit that at times, is ſome how or other, catch'd, that if once depreſſed can never be recover'd again.

We have for ſome time paſt had in Sileſia new Rivals in the fine Linens, and as their progreſs is already too great, if we neglect timeouſly to encourage our own goods of that kind, our Manufacture will receive a check, before it come to its full vigour, by the cheapneſs of theſe Linens from Sileſia, if they are ſuffer'd to come in upon us loaded with only a trifle more than the preſent ſmall dutys on them.

We ſhould endeavour to prevent all needleſs interfering betwixt any of the different parts of our Dominions; but it is apprehended, that if the fine Linens are diſcouraged, theſe Countys of Scotland, where they have begun them, and which are by no means proper for coarſe goods, muſt neceſſarily throw themſelves into the midling ſorts of Linens, in which Ireland has been as yet unrival'd, and ſurely it cannot be for the intereſt of the whole, to have any jarrings betwixt fellow-ſubjects, who ſhould all contribute, every one in their own particular way, to the good of theſe Kingdoms.

There may likewiſe be an interfering, of a different ſort, betwixt England and Scotland, if the latter is check'd in any of the branches of its Linen-manufacture. The People of that Country, ſince they have taſted the ſweets of labour and induſtry, ſeem beginning to ſhake off that indolent unconcern about their Intereſt, which has been ſo long their reproach, and is certainly the chief cauſe of the ſmallneſs of their wealth. If diſcouraged in Manufactures of one kind, they will fly to others. They have great temptations to undertake the Woolen-trade, from the cheapneſs of labour, and plenty of Wool in that Country.

There have already been ſome attempts made by them, in the fine Woolen-goods, which have ſucceeded better than could have been expected from a firſt eſſay. Here, then, is a danger of theſe two Kingdoms interfering, which no other Method poſſibly can prevent, than

than by encouraging the whole People of Scotland to apply univerſally to the Linen-manufacture.

To ſupport the above reaſoning, we have from Mr *Gee*'s valuable *Treatiſe on Trade*, an inſtance of a Country taking up the Woolen, when diſappointed in the Linen Manufacture, even in England; Mr. Gee informs us in the Introduction to the above Treatiſe, that in King William's time, the Manufacture of fine Linen was ſettled in Somerſetſhire and Dorſetſhire, and ſo increaſed in his Reign, that in a few years it was computed, that in a Diſtrict of ten miles ſquare, they made yearly to the value of One hundred thouſand pounds in fine Linens; but on the peace with France, the foreign Linens were brought in ſo cheap, and by that means the Home-manufactures there, ſo diſcouraged, that at this day there is no veſtige of a Fine-Linen Manufacture in theſe Countys, and but a ſmall quantity of coarſe Linens made, and even theſe almoſt intirely for their own uſe; but now the fine Woolen Manufacture is at this day carried on there to a very great extent, that part of the Country being at preſent the chief place in all England for all ſorts of fine woolen goods.

Since we have mentioned Mr. Gee, we muſt notice an obſervation of this judicious Author, that the Linen-manufacture in the Northern parts of Britain may be made as conſiderable as the Woolen in the Southern parts.

We hope it will not be taken amiſs, if we attempt to ſhow that the Manufacture of fine Linens, if carefully attended to and ſuitably encourag'd, may prove much more extenſive than that of the coarſe can poſſibly be, which we think, we have good reaſon to aſſert: for it muſt be noticed, that the northern Countrys of Europe muſt at all times underſell us in the Manufacture of coarſe goods, both on account of the cheapneſs of their coarſe flax, of which theſe goods are made, and alſo on account of their great cheapneſs of ſpinning and weaving: and theſe are encouragements of ſuch weight, as no care or induſtry of ours can ever ſo far overcome, as to make our coarſe goods come cheaper than theirs at any foreign market. This being the caſe, the utmoſt circle of the

conſumpt of our coarſe goods, is our own Dominions in Europe and America.

But the fine Linen is a branch of the Manufacture that we may poſſibly export to other Nations, and that we may do it in future times, if properly taken care of, will not ſeem greatly improbable, when a little conſidered.

In this view, it becomes an Object of great Moment, well worth the utmoſt attention of the Publick, and of quite another ſort of conſequence than the coarſe Linens, whether we conſider the high value of the goods produced, or the poſſible extent of their ſale.

We have already noticed the great excellency of our flax and yarns: this puts us in poſſeſſion of the firſt materials of the fine Manufacture in a way ſuperior to moſt Nations of Europe, if not to all; and as theſe northern Countrys that underſell us moſt in the coarſe goods, are in ſome meaſure debarr'd by Nature from the fine, by the want of proper flax of their own growth for theſe goods, and tho' they had proper flax, yet as we have got the ſtart of them as to fine Linens, which it is probable, they may never have ſubſtance to carry on to any great extent, nor patience to undergo the firſt eſſays and diſappointments neceſſarily attending a new buſineſs, more eſpecially that they are otherways fully employed in the coarſe goods, and that now for a conſiderable length of time; we ſay, on theſe conſiderations, it is not impoſſible, but we may one time or other ſhare with the Dutch in furniſhing the northern Countrys with fine Linens: nor does it ſeem greatly improbable that we may in time furniſh the Spaniſh and Portuguiſe Dominions in Europe and America with them. We know that tho' the Flemings were once intirely Maſters of the Woolen-trade, They loſt it to the Engliſh; and there ſeems to be ſome reaſon to hope that the fine Linens may be likewiſe gain'd from them by proper helps from the Legiſlature.

Many Counties in Britain are at leaſt as cheap to live in as Flanders, and it is well known that in works requiring ingenuity and addreſs, our Britiſh Work-men have much the advantage

of

of their neighbours, as may be ſeen by the many new branches of Manufactures brought into Britain, within this laſt Century, which we were before obliged to Foreigners for, particularly the French, whereas we now both ſerve ourſelves in them, and export to a great value. Inſtances of which are our Clocks, Watches, Hatts, Glaſſes, Steel, Cutlery-ware, Toys of all ſorts, Mathematical Inſtruments, *&c. &c. &c.* in moſt of which it is ſaid the Britiſh now excel all other Nations.

By what we have ſaid as to the fine Linens, we would not be thought any way to derogate from the merits of the Manufacture of coarſe Linen; on the contrary, we heartily wiſh to ſee it flouriſhing to its utmoſt extent. But as we are firmly perſuaded, there is abundance of room for both, we hope the friends of the coarſe Manufacture will take no umbrage at the reflections we have made as to the excellency of the fine Linens; and if it be thought we have rather puſh'd them too far, we hope it will be forgiven, as it proceeded from an honeſt fondneſs for the welfare of our native Country.

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